

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of the claims in this application, and supersedes and replaces all earlier versions and all earlier listings.

1. (Canceled)
2. (Previously Presented) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response text preparation means prepares said response text in a form corresponding to a medium at a response addressee.
3. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim 19, further comprising definition information storage means for storing definition information that defines a response ~~content~~ message for a status, wherein said response ~~content~~ determination message selection means ~~determines~~ selecting a response content by referring to said definition information storage means.
4. (Previously Presented) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said status acquired by said status acquisition means indicates there are a plurality of statuses that occur at the same time.
5. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response ~~content~~ text preparation means includes response content information preparation data storage means for storing fixed information for each portion

of a content text that is prepared, and employs said fixed information to prepare a response content text.

6. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response content text preparation means includes response content preparation rule storage means for storing a response content preparation rule, and employs said response content preparation rule to prepare a response content.

7. (Previously Presented) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response text preparation means includes:

text preparation means for preparing text that serves as part of said response text; and

additional sentence preparation means for preparing the opening or closing phrase.

8. (Previously Presented) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response text output means transmits said response text using electronic mail.

9. (Previously Presented) A response apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said response text output means includes addition means for adding an electronic mail header or an electronic mail footer to the response text prepared by said response text preparation means.

10. (Previously Presented) A-response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response text output means outputs the response text to a telephone.

11. (Previously Presented) A response apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the telephone is a portable telephone.

12. (Previously Presented) A response apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said response text output means transmits the response text to a management system.

13. (Previously Presented) A response apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the management system is a database management system.

14. (Previously Presented) A response apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the management system is a file management system.

15. (Previously Presented) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response text output means transmits the response text using a home page.

16. (Previously Presented) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response text output means outputs the response text using sound.

17. (Previously Presented) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response text output means outputs the response text to a pocket bell.

18. (Previously Presented) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response text output means outputs the response text to a facsimile machine.

19. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus comprising:
status acquisition means for acquiring a status of a machine to be checked;
discrimination means for discriminating a type of an error indicated by the acquired status;
response addressee ~~determination~~ selection means for ~~determining~~ selecting a response addressee depending upon the discriminated type of the error;
response medium ~~determination~~ selection means for ~~determining~~ selecting a response medium based on the discriminated type of the error;
response message ~~determination~~ selection means for ~~determining~~ selecting a response message in accordance with the discriminated type of the error;
phrase selection means for selecting an opening or closing phrase in accordance with the selected response medium;
response text preparation means for preparing a response text by appending [[an]] the selected opening or closing phrase ~~that is characteristic text of the determined response medium to the determined~~ selected response message ~~in a text form; and~~

response text output means for outputting the prepared response text to ~~said~~
~~determined~~ the selected response addressee using the ~~determined~~ selected response
medium.

20. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim 19,
wherein said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection means selects a response
procedure from a plurality of available response procedures.

21. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim
[[19]] 20, wherein said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection means ~~determines~~
selects a response procedure in consonance with the degree of importance of said status.

22. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim 19,
wherein said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection means ~~determines~~ selects whether
or not a response is to be transmitted.

23. - 25. (Canceled)

26. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim 19,
wherein said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection means designates a response
timing.

27. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection means designates a language type.

28. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection means ~~determines~~ selects the degree of detail in an explanation.

29. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection means determines a condition for transmission of a response.

30. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection means ~~determines~~ selects a re-response procedure.

31. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection means ~~determines~~ selects the number of re-responses.

32. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim 19, further comprising definition information storage means for storing definition information that defines a response procedure for a status, wherein said response procedure

~~determination~~ selection means ~~determines~~ selects a response procedure by referring to said definition information storage means.

33. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 32, wherein status data in said definition information indicate a single status.

34. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 32, wherein status data in said definition information also include a combination composed of a plurality of statuses.

35. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 32, wherein status data in said definition information also include a status that changes as time elapses.

36. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 32, wherein statuses in said definition information also include a plurality of statuses that occur at the same time.

37. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 19, further comprising response procedure designation means for designating a response procedure for each status, wherein, in consonance with said acquired status, said response procedure selection means selects a response procedure designated by said response procedure designation means.

38. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus comprising:

response procedure ~~determination~~ selection means for ~~determining~~ selecting a response procedure ~~including~~ by selecting a response addressee and a response medium;

response information preparation means for preparing response information in accordance with the ~~determined~~ selected response procedure;

response information output means for outputting the prepared response information to the ~~determined~~ selected response addressee using the ~~determined~~ selected response medium;

response result determination means for determining whether or not a response has failed as a result of outputting the response information; and

re-response control means for, when said response result determination means ascertains that said response has failed, permitting said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection means to ~~determine~~ select a re-response procedure so that at least one of a response addressee ~~[[or]]~~ and a response medium of the re-response procedure is different from that of the ~~determined~~ selected response procedure leading to the failed response, permitting said response information preparation means to prepare re-response information in accordance with the selected re-response procedures, and permitting said response information output means to output the prepared re-response information.

39. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim 38, further comprising status acquisition means for acquiring a status, wherein said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection means ~~determines~~ selects a response procedure in consonance with said status that is acquired.

40. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim 38, wherein said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection means selects a response procedure from a plurality of available response procedures.

41. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 38, wherein said response result determination means employs a status after said response information has been output to determine whether or not a response has failed.

42. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 41, wherein said status after said response information has been output is a status obtained when a predetermined time has elapsed following output of said response information.

43. (Canceled)

44. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus comprising:
response procedure ~~determination~~ selection means for ~~determining~~ selecting
a response procedure ~~including~~ by selecting a response addressee and a response medium;
response information preparation means for preparing response information
in accordance with the ~~determined~~ selected response procedures;
response information output means for outputting the prepared response
information to the ~~determined~~ selected response addressee using the ~~determined~~ selected
response medium;

response addressee status acquisition means for acquiring a status for the ~~determined~~ selected response addressee;

determination means for employing the status for the ~~determined~~ selected response addressee that is acquired by said response addressee status acquisition means to determine whether or not a person at the ~~determined~~ selected response addressee can manage the response; and

re-response control means for, when said determination means determines that ~~[[said]]~~ the person at the response addressee cannot manage the response, permitting said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection means to ~~determine~~ select a re-response procedure so that at least one of a re-response addressee ~~[[or]]~~ and a re-response medium of the re-response procedure is different from that of the ~~determined~~ selected response procedure leading to the response which could not be managed by ~~[[said]]~~ the person at the response addressee, permitting said response information preparation means to prepare re-response information in accordance with the selected re-response procedure, and permitting said response information output means to output the prepared re-response information ~~in accordance with the re-response procedure.~~

45. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim 44, further comprising status acquisition means for acquiring a status, wherein said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection means ~~determines~~ selects a response procedure in consonance with said status that is acquired.

46. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim 44, wherein said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection means selects a response procedure from a plurality of available response procedures.

47. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 44, wherein, after said response information has been output, said determination means employs a reply from said response addressee to determine whether or not said response addressee is capable of handling a response.

48. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 47, wherein, in consonance with whether said reply is transmitted within a predetermined period of time after said response information has been output, said determination means determines whether or not said response addressee is capable of handling a response.

49. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 47, wherein, in consonance with whether or not the effect ability to cope with a response is described in said reply, said determination means determines whether or not said response addressee is capable of handling a response.

50. (Canceled)

51. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 44, wherein said determination means performs a determination before transmission of a response to a response addressee that is an object for said determination.

52. (Canceled)

53. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in said response information preparation step, the response information is prepared in a form corresponding to a medium at a response addressee.

54. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, further comprising the step of storing definition information that defines a response content for a status, wherein, in said response content ~~determination~~ selection step, a response content is ~~determined~~ selected by referring to the definition information.

55. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 70, wherein the status acquired in said status acquisition step indicates there are a plurality of statuses that occur at the same time.

56. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in response content preparation step, response content information preparation data storage means is referred to in which is stored fixed information for each portion of a

content that is prepared, and the fixed information is employed to prepare a response content.

57. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in said response content preparation step, response content preparation rule storage means is referred to in which is stored a response content preparation rule, and the response content preparation rule is employed to prepare a response content.

58. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 70, wherein said response information preparation step includes:
a text preparation step, of preparing text of the response information; and
an additional sentence preparation step, of preparing the opening or closing phrase.

59. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in said response information output step, the response information is transmitted using electronic mail.

60. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 59, wherein said response information output step includes an addition step, of adding an electronic mail header or an electronic mail footer to response information prepared in said response information preparation step.

61. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in said response information output step, response information is output to a telephone.

62. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 61, wherein the telephone is a portable telephone.

63. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in said response information output step, response information is transmitted to a management system.

64. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 63, wherein the management system is a database management system.

65. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 63, wherein the management system is a file management system.

66. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in said response information output step, response information is transmitted using a home page.

67. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in said response information output step, response information is output using sound.

68. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in said response information output step, response information is output to a pocket bell.

69. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in said response information output step, response information is output to a facsimile machine.

70. (Currently Amended) A response method comprising the steps of:
acquiring a status of a machine to be checked;
discriminating a type of an error indicated by the acquired status;
~~determining~~ selecting a response addressee depending upon the discriminated type of the error;
~~determining~~ selecting a response medium based on the discriminated type of the error;
~~determining~~ selecting a response message in accordance with the discriminated type of the error;
selecting an opening or closing phrase in accordance with the selected response medium;

preparing a response text by appending [[an]] the selected opening or closing phrase ~~that is characteristic text of the determined response medium~~ to the selected ~~determined~~ response message in a text form; and

outputting the prepared response text to the ~~determined~~ selected response addressee using the selected ~~determined~~ response medium.

71. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection step, a response procedure is selected from a plurality of available response procedures.

72. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection step, a response procedure is ~~determined~~ selected in consonance with the degree of importance of the status.

73. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection step, whether or not a response is to be transmitted is determined.

74. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection step, a response content is designated.

75. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection step, a response medium is designated.

76. (Canceled)

77. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection step, a response timing is designated.

78. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in said response procedure ~~determination~~ step, a language type is designated.

79. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection step, the degree of detail in an explanation is determined.

80. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection step, a condition for transmission of a response is ~~determined~~ selected.

81. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection step, a re-response procedure is determined selected.

82. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 81, wherein, in said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection step, the number of re-responses is determined.

83. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, further comprising a definition information storage step, of storing definition information that defines a response procedure for a status, wherein, in said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection step, a response procedure is ~~determined~~ selected by referring to said definition information storage step.

84. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 83, wherein status data in the definition information indicate a single status.

85. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 83, wherein status data in the definition information also include a combination composed of a plurality of statuses.

86. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 83, wherein status data in the definition information also include a status that changes as time elapses.

87. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 83, wherein statuses in the definition information also include a plurality of statuses that occur at the same time.

88. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 70, further comprising a response procedure designation step, of designating a response procedure for each status, wherein, in consonance with the acquired status, in said response procedure selection step, a response procedure is selected that has been designated in said response procedure designation step.

89. (Currently Amended) A response method comprising the steps of:
~~determining~~ selecting a response procedure including a response addressee and a response medium;

preparing response information in accordance with the selected ~~determined~~ response procedure;

outputting the prepared response information to the selected ~~determined~~ response addressee using the selected ~~determined~~ response medium;

determining whether or not a response has failed as a result of outputting the response information; and

determining, when it is ascertained in said response result determination step that the response has failed, a re-response procedure so that at least one of a re-response addressee ~~[[or]]~~ and a re-response medium of the re-response procedure is different from that of the selected ~~determined~~ response procedure leading to the failed response, preparing re-response information in said response information preparation step in accordance with the re-response procedure, and outputting the re-response information in said response information output step.

90. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 89, further comprising a status acquisition step, of acquiring a status, wherein, in said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection step, a response procedure is ~~determined~~ selected in consonance with the status that is acquired.

91. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 89, wherein, in said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection step, a response procedure is selected from a plurality of available response procedures.

92. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 89, wherein, in said response result ~~determination~~ selection step, a status after the response information has been output is employed to determine whether or not a response has failed.

93. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 92, wherein the status after the response information has been output is a status obtained when a predetermined time has elapsed following output of the response information.

94. (Canceled)

95. (Currently Amended) A response method comprising the steps of:
~~determining~~ selecting a response procedure;
preparing response information in accordance with the ~~determined~~ selected response procedure including a response addressee and a response medium;
outputting the prepared response information to the ~~determined~~ selected response addressee using the determined response medium;
acquiring a status for the ~~determined~~ selected response addressee;
employing the status for the ~~determined~~ selected response addressee that is acquired in said response addressee status acquisition step to determine whether or not a person at the ~~determined~~ selected response addressee can manage the response; and
determining, when it is ascertained in said determination step that the person cannot manage the response, a re-response procedure so that at least one of a re-response addressee ~~[[or]]~~ and a re-response medium of the re-response procedure is different from that of the ~~determined~~ selected response procedure leading to the response which could not be managed by said person in said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection step, preparing re-response information in said response information preparation step in accordance with the re-response procedure, and outputting the re-response

information in said response information output step in accordance with the re-response procedure.

96. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 95, further comprising a status acquisition step, of acquiring a status, wherein, in said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection step, a response procedure is ~~determined~~ selected in consonance with the status that is acquired.

97. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 95, wherein, in said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection step, a response procedure is selected from a plurality of available response procedures.

98. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 95, wherein, in said determination step, after the response information has been output, a reply from the response addressee is employed to determine whether or not the response addressee is capable of handling a response.

99. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 98, wherein, in said determination step, whether or not the response addressee is capable of handling a response is determined in consonance with whether the reply is transmitted within a predetermined period of time after the response information has been output.

100. (Previously Presented) A response method according to claim 98, wherein, in said determination step, whether or not the response addressee is capable of handling a response is determined in consonance with whether or not the effect ability to cope with a response is described in the reply.

101. (Canceled)

102. (Original) A response method according to claim 95, wherein said determination is performed before transmission of a response to a response addressee that is an object for said determination.

103. (Canceled)

104. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium in which is stored a response program for controlling a computer to transmit a response, said program comprising codes for enabling said computer to perform the steps of:

acquiring a status of a machine to be checked;

discriminating a type of an error indicated by the acquired status;

~~determining~~ selecting a response addressee depending upon the discriminated type of the error;

~~determining~~ selecting a response medium based on the discriminated type of the error;

~~determining~~ selecting a response message in accordance with the discriminated type of the error;

selecting an opening or closing phrase in accordance with the selected response medium;

preparing response text by appending ~~[[an]]~~ the selected opening or closing phrase ~~that is characteristic text of the determined response medium to the determined~~ selected response message in a text form corresponding to the ~~determined~~ selected response medium; and

outputting the prepared response text to the ~~determined~~ selected response addressee in accordance with the ~~determined~~ selected response procedure.

105. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable storage medium in which is stored a response program for controlling a computer to transmit a response, said program comprising codes for enabling said computer to perform the steps of:

~~determining~~ selecting a response procedure including a response addressee and a response medium;

preparing response information in accordance with the ~~determined~~ selected response procedure;

outputting the prepared response information to the ~~determined~~ selected response addressee using the determined response medium;

determining whether or not a response has failed as a result of outputting the response information; and

determining, when it is ascertained in said response result determination step that the response has failed, a re-response procedure so that at least one of a re-response addressee [[or]] and a re-response medium of the re-response procedure is different from that of the ~~determined~~ selected response procedure leading to the failed response in said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection step, preparing re-response information in said response information preparation step in accordance with the re-response procedure, and outputting the re-response information in said response information output step.

106. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium in which is stored a response program for controlling a computer to transmit a response, said program comprising codes for enabling said computer to perform the steps of:

~~determining~~ selecting a response procedure including a response addressee and a response medium;

preparing response information in accordance with the ~~determined~~ selected response procedure;

outputting the prepared response information to the ~~determined~~ selected response addressee using the ~~determined~~ selected response medium;

acquiring a status for the ~~determined~~ selected response addressee;

employing the status for the ~~determined~~ selected response addressee that is acquired in said response addressee status acquisition step to determine whether or not a person at the ~~determined~~ selected response addressee can manage the response; and

determining, when it is ascertained in said determination step that the person cannot manage the response, a re-response procedure so that at least one of a re-response addressee [[or]] and a re-response medium of the re-response procedure is different from that of the ~~determined~~ selected response procedure leading to the response which could not be managed by the person in said response procedure ~~determination~~ selection step, preparing re-response information in said response information preparation step in accordance with the re-response procedure, and outputting the re-response information in said response information output step in accordance with the re-response procedure.